

**Karen I. Adams, Dean  
College of Education and Human Services  
Central Michigan University  
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**At Central Michigan University we are committed to preparing very strong classroom teachers who come with a strong knowledge in their content areas; an understanding of diverse populations such as special needs students, students for whom English is not a first language, students from low socio economic backgrounds, students in both urban and rural settings; and the ability to evaluate and reflect on their own instruction and the impact it has on K-12 student learning in their classrooms. This kind of content richness is reflective of the requirements of the No Child Left Behind legislation.**

**You have a brochure on the CLEAR model, our Conceptual Framework, which spells out this commitment to a Content rich program that is learner centered and prepares our students to reflect on their instructional approaches in the classroom.**

**You also have a brochure that describes the ways in which we do ensure a diversity of field experiences for our students, beginning very early in their teacher preparation program, continuing consistently with additional observation and teaching experiences of increasing responsibility and length, and culminating in a 16-week student teaching experience, although the state of Michigan only requires 6 weeks in this student teaching placement.**

**We take our field experiences very seriously and believe that they prepare our graduates for whatever classrooms they may enter in the future. In fact, responding to perspectives in books such as "The World is Flat," CMU has consistently provided international field experiences for our students. We presently offer four international Student Teaching experiences, as described in brochures in your folder. Through these experiences students complete 8 weeks of student teaching in Michigan followed by 8 weeks of student teaching in an international setting supervised on site by a CMU faculty member. These sites are Enfield, England (outside London); Perth, Western Australia; the Dominican Republic; and Ghana, West Africa. We also offer a Mid Tier placement for 3 weeks in May in Oaxaca, Mexico targeting students in their sophomore or junior years. We consistently receive very positive comments from principals and superintendents who are eager to hire students who have**

completed these international placements, finding that they bring an enriched understanding of diversity, flexibility, and overall value added to the classroom.

We believe that the quality of our thorough preparation assists our graduates in the employment process. We annually identify a placement rate of between 90% and 93%.

Central also has a long-standing commitment to continue to stay in touch and provide services to our program graduates. We regularly survey our recent graduates, following their first and third years of teaching, as well as their employers, concerning their satisfaction with various areas of our preparation program. Based on these responses, we have made specific adjustments in our programs as necessary. Most recently, we have added a course to assist our students in working with special needs populations, although the Michigan Department of Education requires no such course for certification. Our students, however, identified this as a need, and we have responded accordingly.

We provide services to our own graduates as well as other teachers in the state through our extensive and long-existing outreach program. We regularly offer nine on-going cohorts of our Masters in the Principalship at sites throughout the state. Our Masters in Reading and Literacy is offered on three different sites in the state. We alternate annual offerings of our Doctor of Education between on- and off-campus sites. This year we are at Port Huron with the program.

We are currently developing a program to offer our graduate endorsement in Middle Level Education in the metro Detroit area.

We have signed an agreement and will initiate a 2 + 2 Elementary Education completion program on the Lansing Community College campus beginning this fall. All upper division courses will be taught by CMU faculty on site. In an effort to increase the number of elementary teachers with strong science credentials, this program is designed around an Integrated Science major and a Language Arts minor. We believe this will provide very strong preparation for teachers in this program.

We have a similar arrangement in Traverse City with plans to branch out to one or two more community college locations in an effort to assist students

who are for various reasons place bound but would like to enter teaching as a profession.

We also have an on-going Alternate Route to Secondary Certification program that is in its third year. This fast track to initial certification for those already possessing an undergraduate degree in a teachable area has proven very helpful for working adults interested in a career change to teaching. We have chosen to emphasize Math, the Sciences, Foreign Languages, and Industrial Education Technology which have all been identified as high need areas.

In both our traditional teacher preparation programs and our alternate route program we require that students complete all professional education coursework before student teaching. Our students typically take the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) in their teaching majors and minors just before or during Student Teaching. Our overall pass rate for first-time test takers on the MTTC has been above the state average for the past five years, which is particularly important considering the large number of program completers in our teacher preparation program each year—approximately 750.

## **Response to Recent Criticisms**

**As I consider the criticisms launched in the past few years against teacher preparation programs nationally, I believe it is important to note that the majority of these criticisms are not the responsibility of teacher preparation programs. These issues include:**

**Teachers are teaching out of field—not in their academic teaching majors.** This is an employment issue, not a teacher preparation issue. We do not employ or place teachers in classrooms outside of their teaching major or minor.

**Critics of teacher preparation would have us stress Content Knowledge without a balance of Pedagogy.**

We at CMU remain firmly committed to a university-wide teacher preparation program with a strong content basis in the majors and minors, such as math, biology, English, or Social Studies balanced by a strong pedagogy component. Without this corresponding Balance of Professional Education courses to prepare students to TEACH in these content areas, we may find teachers in classrooms who know their disciplines extremely well but cannot communicate these subjects to students in their classrooms. This is NOT the kind of graduate we want at Central, and I do not believe it is the kind of graduate you want teaching the children of Michigan.

**Teacher preparation programs are criticized for high rates of Teacher Turnover.**

In responding to the issue of Teacher Turnover, school districts must consider related planned efforts at Teacher Retention such as Mentorship programs. Teacher preparation programs are more than happy to assist with such mentoring.

**Teacher Preparation programs are not preparing sufficient numbers of Science and Math Teachers.**

School Districts or the State of Michigan could assist by providing incentives, such as higher salaries, scholarships, or tax breaks, for students entering these teaching areas, as has been the case in other states? Often students who major in math or the sciences are encouraged to pursue other careers that are more lucrative or offer better work environments. Incentives might dissuade these students.

**Teacher Preparation programs should be held responsible for Low Performing K-12 schools.**

I assume that this responsibility is based on the fact that it is our graduates who are teaching in these schools. BUT, what about other factors such as repeatedly slashed budgets for school districts that mean teachers will not have the necessary teaching supplies needed and that class sizes will be increased. What, also, about home environments that may not have prepared students for success in school or that do not support their learning? All of these issues must be weighed in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

**Teacher Preparation institutions are asked to do an increasing number of things in preparing teachers. New requirements have been added by the state which involve additional courses as well as certifications such as CPR.**

These increased requirements mean that the hours and time to graduation are continuously increased for students while salaries do not change.

I do appreciate the fact that the new Diagnostic Reading requirement, which is an important and necessary requirement, has been added not to the initial certification program but to the additional 18 hours required for a teacher to move from Provisional Certification to Professional Certification. I hope that any subsequent requirements will be handled in this same manner.

**Teacher preparation programs are not assessing teacher effectiveness.**

Teacher Preparation Institutions in Michigan meet Michigan Department of Education requirements for program approval, but some of us, including Central Michigan University, are also nationally accredited by NCATE (the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education). NCATE looks well beyond evaluations of faculty credentials and course syllabi to ensure that program assessment measures are in place to evaluate whether or not our graduates are, indeed, making a positive impact on students in their classrooms.